

critical digest

505 FIFTH AVENUE. N. Y. 17. N. Y.
MU 2-0328 T. M. KRAUS



April 13, 1955 Vol. VII No. 29 The Weekly New York City Theatre Newsletter 325 Year

This Week

Meet the People-1955
Cafe Theatre-235 W 46-
4/13. Stander & Gernay pre-
sent revue. Opens for dinner
7PM, extra midnight shows
Fri, Sat, Sun..

Ankles Aweigh- Hellinger
4/18. Hoyt-Hammerstein-Fin-
klehoffe present musical
comedy with Betty & Jane
Kean, Mark Dawson, Lew Parker.

All in One-Playhouse 4/19.
Charles Bowden-Richard Barr
present triple bill of Bern-
stein opera "Trouble in Tah-
iti", Paul Draper and Will-
iams "27 Wagons Full of Cot-
ton."

Future Dates

Guys & Dolls-City Center
4/20...Daherit The Wind-
National 4/21...Phoenix '55
-Phoenix 4/23...The Henays
Longacre-4/28...South Pacific
-City Center 5/4...Damn Yan-
kee-46th St 5/5...Finians Rain-
bow-City Center 5/18...Seventh
Heaven-AFA 5/26...Pleasure
Dome 5/27...Almost Crazy-De
Lys 6/1...Once Upon a Tailor
6/1.

Tryout Dates

Seventh Heaven-New Haven
4/16, Philadelphia 4/26, Boston
5/10.

Summer Issues of "C.D."

Summer Issues of C.D.
will cover tryouts of new
plays in Eastern summer thea-
tres as reported in local
dailies, trade journals and
via personal inspection.
Plus other features.

Digests of Current Week Theatre Reviews

3 for Tonight-Plymouth 4/6. Unanimous notices,
some rave, some mild, greeted Paul Gregory presentation
of Harry Belafonte, Marge and Gower Champion. Voices
of Walter Schumann, and Hiram Sherman in a "diversion in
song and dance." A thoroughly agreeable, clean, show runs
up Atkinson, Times. Kerr, Herald Tribune, would have enjoyed
proceedings with just Belafonte, and minus the overlong
take-off on Oklahoma. Minor complaint filed by Chapman,
News, is that producer is microphone crazy. Otherwise he
agreed show is one of pleasantest ways to spend evening
on the town. One of those rare shows that is in a class
by itself, adds Hawkins, World Telegram & Sun. Show gives
viewer some talented people in their most talented mood,
notes Watts, Post.

Teach Me How To Cry- De Lys 4/6. Four pros and 2
mild cons make up critical file of Patricia Joudry's
play about two unhappy teenagers who fall in love. First
production of LPS, INC, was applauded by Times, Mirror, WT AS,
and Post reviewers as a well acted, well presented Off
Broadway play. Herald Tribune and Journal American aisle
sitters agreed production was tops, but did not think
script first rate. Former found much of it tenuous and
small, latter sure some day author will deliver a big time
play. Have parade headed by Atkinson, Times, who termed
it superior work in all categories. Critic concluded notice
"The return engagement of "Three Penny Opera" can wait".
Deirdre Owens and Richard Morse, in the leading roles, were
lauded as both touching and admirable. A sincere and some-
times moving play, added Coleman, Mirror. Two milder votes
of approval filed by Hawkins, WTAS, and Watts, Post. Hawkins
noted nearly every element of production could justly
serve in first class commercial theatre, but total effect
is slightly undergraduate. Since it is all workable and
diverting, he concludes, it is off Broadway at its most
appropriate. Post man noted author hasn't pulled all her
characters together expertly enough, but he still found
much that is honest, moving and likeable about the show.

Cat On Hot Tin Roof Elephant Story Dropped

In a series of events that are not quite clear, the
"elephant story" told by Burl Ives in Cat on a Hot Tin
Roof has been deleted from script. License Commissioner
McCaffrey requested a copy of the script one day, and the
next day the producers announced story was dropped. Var-
iety editorial asks who made McCaffrey censor? His author-
ity is limited to physical buildings, and should stay that
way, trade paper urges. Paper, WTAS, wonders if story was
dropped because it wasn't getting a big enough laugh.

NYC first outdoor "theatre in a park" will present plays, musical events, ballet dance and band concerts from June 24 to August 28. An open air theatre seating 2000 on the East Side Drive near Williamsburg Bridge will be the site of the project run by the staff of the Henry Street Settlement Playhouse. An area belongs to city no admission charge can be made. Betty Young, associate director of Henry Street Settlement Playhouse, is promoting the project.

Plays

Marlowe will be first Playwrights Company production next season, a new drama by Leslie Stevens based on life of Christopher Marlowe... Cornelia Otis Skinner will present The Wives of Henry VIII May 1 at Plymouth Theatre for benefit of Equity Library Theatre... The Flowering Peach is presenting Sunday evening performances, and Wed and Sat matinees... Kermit Bloomgarden lists 3 fall openings—A View from the Bridge—Sept 28, Diary of a Young Girl Oct 5, and The Lark Oct 12... A View from the Bridge is collective title of two one act Arthur Miller plays, which will star Van Heflin. Play may be tested in several summer theatres.

Players

Bill Johnson, currently in Kismet, signed for male lead of Pipe Dream... Oscar Karlweis fractured his ankle, causing postponement of Once Upon a Tailor... Mary Finney will stay in The Homeys... Marjorie Barrett replaces Janet Hale, The Flowering Peach... Tom Helmore replaces John Williams, The Dark is Light Enough... Gene Blakely replaces Wendell Clark, The Desperate Hours... Anniversary Waltz played host to casts of 44 & 45th St shows at Shubert Alley black party.

Summer Playhouses

After the Ball, Noel Coward musical, will be presented at Lambertville, NJ Aug 2-7... Robert Thoms's The Minstaur will be presented at Westport, Conn starring Frenchot Tone... Red Barn Theatre, Northport, LI, will open 3rd season Jun 28.

Other Broadways

Saint of Bleeker Street with original Broadway cast will be presented in Washington Jun 30-Jul 13... St. Louis Express Theatre which had been presenting a stock company for the past four seasons folded... Third company of Teahouse of the August Moon will tour in the fall.

Theatre Ad Notes

Inherit the Wind electrician received billing in Philadelphia ads.

Theatre Vaudeville Notes

Palace show headed by Johnny Morgan and includes Penny & Paul, Mansfields, Larry & Trudy Loung, Sinclair & Alda and Dyerette's... "Springtiding's" revue and "Glory of Easter" continue at Radio City Music Hall.

Theatre Film Notes

"Richard III" film produced and directed by Laurence Olivier to be released in US by United Artists... "Pajama Game" film rights bought by Warners for cash payment of \$750,000 plus 50% of profits from film... Macdonald Carey taking five day leave from Anniversary Waltz to make pilot TV film of "Mr. Blandings."

Theatre TV-Radio Notes

NBC TV "Petrified Forest" cast on May 30 includes Humphrey Bogart, Henry Fonda and Lauren Bacall... Maurice Evans to produce a monthly color TV show on NBC TV Sundays from 4 to 5 30 starting Oct 23. He will star in two dramas and be host on others... CBS TV plans to co-star Mary Martin and Noel Coward in TV productions of "Present Laughter" and "Blithe Spirit"... "Three by Thurber", which played at Theatre de Lys, will be made into a TV series by St. John Terrill... Paul Vincent Carroll reads TV scripts for Douglas Fairbanks, TV FILM show... David Wayne will appear in NBC TV production of "Darkness at Noon."

Theatre Book Notes

"The Merry Partners", biography of Harri-gan and Hart now appearing in New Yorker, will be published by Random House... "Bottoms Up" by Cornelia Otis Skinner published by Dodd, Mead... "Sunshine and Shadow", an autobiography of Mary Pickford, published by Doubleday... "America Takes the Stage" by Richard Moody published by Indiana University Press.

CRITICAL DIGEST—weekly digests NYC show news, reviews, comments from 50 publications. Tickets, critics reports. Covers NY shows, drama books, drama records, theatre on TV. Also most theatre briefs. Special summer features. Perfect gift 52 weeks per year for "stage struck" friends, business acquaintances, etc.

\$25 per year for complete service, out of Town & NYC Reports, CD Newsletter.





GREEN

ROOM

DEPARTMENT

BRITISH DILEMMA... London's small theatre clubs must keep their production standards high if they expect less severe criticisms of their productions by daily critics, "Stage" concludes. Actors must know their parts, stage properties must not be mislaid or misfire at the wrong moment, and strict discipline must be maintained both at rehearsals and during performances. Once the critic has agreed not to criticize the performance at little theatres as finely as a West End production, those who run the small houses should be sparing with the excuses.

COLUMN TIPS... Circle in the Square about to reopen with all required safeguards, reports Walker... Charles Laughton to tour in readings of Socrates, hears Kilgallen... Lemuel Ayers insisting all potential backers of Saturday Night read the script, notes Farrell.

ANNUAL GEORGIES... Awards bestowed by George Jean Nathan, Journal American, are carved of solid chocolate and stuffed with delicious nuts. None were awarded this year for a best American or foreign play. Saint of Bleecker Street and Plain and Fancy casts won in musical fields. Liam Redmond, Wayward Saint, and Lynn Fontanne, Quadrille, were picked by critic for best starring performances.

CRITICAL THOUGHTS... It's bad for the theatre when it becomes too placid for angry debate, reminds Watts, Pest... Vast divergence of opinion expressed at conversation male lead in Cat on Hot Tin Roof had via phone reported by McClain, Journal American, who discovered that Truman Capote had his own violent views on the subject... Nearest show with a Moral this season, quips Chapman, News, is House of Flowers which says "The Wages of Sin Is Interior Decoration by Oliver Messel".

DRAMA DESK MAIL... Variety reports it has received many letters panned ANTA Album TV closed circuit show... White Devil performance praised by L. Arnold Weissberger in letter to Times for fine ensemble playing by young US actors... New York theatre fans are grown up enough not to need censors of any kind, legal or illegal, points out C.D. reader.

SALUTE TO FRANCE... The Spartan separation of American art and state is frequently regretted, explains Atkinson, Times, in praising work of "Salute to France" program. Many theatre people have a wistful hope that some time the US government will appropriate a few loose millions to build a fine marble theatre or subsidize a fine repertory company, or just pay a few old bills.

INTERVIEW HI-LITES... Stage lighting is an ideal occupation for a woman, Jean Rosenthal told Sunday Mirror. In this field, she said, you must be absolutely willing to be a collaborator. Everyone else is the star, and you must go around and between all of them to see that things go as they should. When no one in the audience knows where the light on the stage comes from, then you know that you have done your job as it should be done.



"Pros & Cons by T.N.K."

Three for Tonight is a delight. Perfect performances, the proper material for each, plus a magic blend by the producer make this one of the most pleasant evenings in the theatre this season. Danger is that others will try to copy the magic formula.

NY theatre folk and fans have always made fun of censors, from Memphis to Hollywood. Now faced with a minor censor of their own, in the form of an over-anxious license Commissioner, they have, for the most part, become silent. Variety and a few columnists have voiced mild objections. If the public has voiced any objections, the fact has been kept a secret.



OFF
BROADWAY

Sixth Annual Shakespeare Festival of Hofstra College, Hempstead, LI, will include a production of Othello in the college's replica of "The Globe Theatre", a symposium with Eric Bentley and Oscar Campbell, and a Musical of 16th Century music. May 2-8.

Blackfriars production of Bamboo Cross re-opens Apr 14 and plays through May 22... Jim Pritchett has leading role in I Believe in Rabble opening Apr 19 at Players Studio...The Shoestring Revue cast received a raise...Mary Ann Miles replaces Chita Rivera in The Shoestring Revue, latter joining Seventh Heaven...Stage Society will present The Porcelain Clay next fall...Maurice Valency's The Queen's Gambit will be presented at Brander Matthews Theatre, Columbia University, May 4-7, and his The Thracian Horses will be presented at Brandeis University, Mass, June 7-8.

Arthur Miller directs a reading of Death of a Salesman at YWHA Poetry Center Apr 17 Evening and Apr 24 afternoon. Cast includes Luther Adler, Mildred Dunnock, Kevin McCarthy and Howard Smith.

Alan Abel selling tickets for Safari new musical due at President Apr 19, though The Shoestring Revue, theatre's current tenant, is also selling tickets past this date...Max Eisen filed injunction against John Pest and Lucille Lertel halting possible switching of Theatre de Lys lease in June.



THEATRE
BOOK
COMMENTS

"A History of the Theatre" by George Freedley and John Reeves reprinted by Crown was recommended by Coleman, Mirror, as an invaluable service to students and playgoers. 1000 page book offers many rewarding evenings with fascinating and fabulous folk.

"Twice Have the Trumpets Sounded" by Robertson Davies and Tyrone Guthrie published by Clarke, Erwin okayed by Down, Variety. Critic suggested that self-appointed American imitators of Canada's Shakespeare Festival digest Guthrie's advice on project.



THEATRE
TV
COMMENTS

"Reunion in Vienna" NBC TV production with Greer Garson and Brian Aherne drew split notices from NY TV critics. Tuck, Post, and Van Herne, World Telegram & Sun, enjoyed the TV color version of Robert Sherwood 1931 comedy. Latter noted gowns of star were most beautiful yet seen on TV. But other critics, though agreeing that colors of entire production were beautiful, thought the script too dated. Several noted that neither of leads neared Lum and Fontaine in their conceptions of the roles. It all seemed pretty silly, summed up Shanley, Times. Leads of TV show were unconvincing and rarely believable, vetoed Shalit, News.

"Southwest Corner" presented on NBC TV Kraft after its Broadway closing with original cast was panned by Fran, Variety, as a bit too dull in script, though leading players Eva Le Gallienne, Enid Markey and Parker Fennelly all turned in fine jobs. Critic doubts if TV version will aid in any possible tour since too many dull gaps were exposed in TV version.

"Stage Door" presented on CBS TV Best of Broadway was listed by Shanley, Times, as a rapidly paced, sometimes ragged, but generally entertaining production. Diana Lynn and Rhonda Fleming were featured. Direction by Sidney Lumet reminded reviewer of dizzy pace provided by George Abbott in stage plays.



THEATRE
OUT OF
TOWN

The Fifth Season with Chester Morris and Joseph Buloff and Ankles Areigh playing in Boston...Dear Charles, Tea and Sympathy and The King and I in Chicago...The Solid Gold Cadillac and Gays and Dolls in Detroit...The Caine Mutiny Court Martial in Los Angeles...The Tender Trap in Minneapolis...Jann Yankee moves from New Haven to Boston...The Honeys moved to Washington...Inherit the Wind continues in Philadelphia...The Rainmaker with Geraldine Page opens in St Louis...Seven Year Itch with Tom Swell stays in Washington.

